UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/1994/NGO/3
26 July 1994

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-sixth session
Item 18 of the provisional agenda

PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Written statement submitted by the International Human Rights Association of American Minorities, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is distributed in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[21 July 1994]

Discrimination against African American minorities

1. Following the receipt of crucial information from one of the major African American organizations, The Lost-Found Nation of Islam, under the leadership and guidance of the Hon. Silis Muhammad, this communication is submitted to the Sub-Commission for circulation in keeping with the United Nations need to receive early warning of a potentially disastrous disturbance to the global human rights movement.

2. The past and ongoing gross violations of the human rights of African Americans has caused the United States to fall into the same type of abusive minority rights situation against which it so actively and effectively campaigns.

3. When such a situation exists, it becomes a danger to the politico-economic well-being of the State when the oppressed minority awakens to the reality of their protected human rights, while at the time the majority continues to play word games of domination, exploitation and inequality. In such a set of circumstances, the political instrumentality and conceptual framework for effective conflict resolution does not exist.

4. This communication is to advise that just such a volatile situation has developed in the United States, and only a well-considered United Nations input can alter what might otherwise develop into another Bosnia or another cataclysmic slaughter as in Rwanda.

5. The Nation of Islam reports that the dangerous level of frustration felt among African Americans of all socio-economic levels has given rise to efforts to galvanize 1 million African American males to march on Washington D.C. in 1995 to draw government attention to their needs.

6. The gravity of this situation is denoted by the African American standing in any and all statistical indicators of social well-being. As the recent United Nations Development Report noted, while Anglo-Americans top the list of the world's population in socio-economic well-being, African American citizens of the same country only placed 32nd, similar to third world nations, such as Trinidad and Tobago.

7. The convergence of 1 million African American males on Washington D.C. bears major and potentially cataclysmic ramifications. We remind the Sub-Commission that while Washington D.C. is the glittering capital of the world's most democratic and freedom-loving nation, it is also a city where the oppressed African American population at present suffers gravely from the malaise resulting from the past gross violations of their human rights.

8. Most recently, a certain sector of the United States majority has openly declared "war" on this forthcoming March on Washington, which adds more fuel to this developing situation.

9. It is in this context that IHRAAM, acting as a secretariat for many grassroots organizations of American minorities, strongly urges the United Nations to take appropriate steps now to awaken the United States government to this potential threat, and to encourage it to provide real hope of relief to the leadership and masses of African Americans.

10. If this warning is not heeded, who can foretell the gravity of the consequences to the world's human rights system if widescale ethnic strife should erupt again in the heart of every major city in the United States, perhaps crippling or rolling back its most important initiatives on behalf of democracy and human rights internationally.

11. It is IHRAAM's request now, as has been urged in several petitions to the Sub-Commission, that the United Nations use its good offices to launch a thorough investigation into the situation of the formerly-enslaved African American national minority. We suggest that such an investigation should

properly lead to its convening a forum wherein the African American national minority, in its diversity might enter into equal status dialogue and, hopefully, negotiations with the United States Government, towards the resolution of African American grievances.

12. It is suggested that the United Nations act as a third party in setting up such a forum to ensure that such a dialogue is possible without fear of retaliation. Past efforts on the part of African Americans to achieve a sincere dialogue with the majority government have met with failure.

13. In this endeavour, the Nation of Islam would most certainly be willing to act as a coordinator and lend its assistance in bringing about the formation of this forum.

14. It is time for the erasure of the tragic blot on the history of the United States of America, whose struggle for independence and representative government (self determination) otherwise stands as a democratic landmark of its time. If past systemic evils cannot be rectified or even admitted, though the country is awash with its human debris, how can anyone in the United States face the future global village without trepidation?

15. Nothing written in the sands of time endures forever. And yet the consequences of evil acts stretch out upon the generations, suffered by victims and victimizers alike, until the courage is found to resolve them. This dilemma of the United States is no less one for the United Nations, and one no less requiring its courage. To request its major benefactor to examine its own house as rigorously as it might the houses of others requires courage. And yet, just as the United States future human rights credibility may depend upon how it resolves this issue, so may the United Nations present human rights credibility be significantly influenced by United States action or inaction on this issue.

16. In the event that the United Nations might wish to be further advised, IHRAAM has arranged for three attorneys to be present and available to speak to the Working Group of the Sub-Commission on this issue. Their names are: Theodore Eagans, Harriett AbuBakr and Janise Miller.

17. While IHRAAM petitions in the United Nations human rights system had a beneficial effect, the lack of more concrete action by the United Nations sent the wrong signal to both the African American and Anglo-American communities. As indicated by the proposed 1995 March on Washington, the minority/majority situation continues to deteriorate.

- - - - - -